THE NAMING COMMISSION RECOMMENDS

Fort Gregg-Adams

As the new name for Fort Lee, Virginia

Stretching throughout much of the 20th century and spanning four decades of military service, the lives and labors of United States Army sustainers **Arthur Gregg and Charity Adams** demonstrate exceptional and too-often-unheralded excellence in these vital support functions of Army forces.

Ever since the Civil War, the U.S. Army has striven for superb sustainment – the provision of logistics, financial management, personnel services, and health service support necessary to maintain operations until successful mission completion. American soldiers train in peace and fight in war with levels of support and supply unparalleled by any enemy our nation has faced in the modern age. Indeed, behind every rightly heralded story of battlefield bravery lies the often overlooked story of how Army sustainment professionals brought fellow troops the bullets, food, water, gasoline, armor, and – in recent years – networking services that sustain them in battles on behalf of the United States.

The Army Sustainment story has also been diverse. Even when the service was still segregated, an array of Army teamsters, stevedores, quartermasters, ordnance techs, and many other support forces worked with distinction to supply and maintain our combat forces around the world.

Like many Americans in the 1940s, Charity Adams started her service in response to the attack on America and the threats caused by global war. Born and raised in a segregated society, by the time the war began, the 22-year-old Adams had already graduated high school as class valedictorian, completed a bachelor's degree, and started a career as a teacher. In the middle of pursuing a master's degree in psychology in 1942, Adams paused her education to serve her nation in the newly created Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. Recognized for her scholarly skills and abilities in leadership, Adams was assigned to Officer Candidate School. Upon her commissioning, she stayed at the OCS to train subsequent classes of leaders.

In 1944, at the age of 25, Adams was selected to command the first unit of African-American women to serve overseas. Leading the 6888th Central Postal Directory in England, Adams' unit was tasked with delivering mail to and from almost seven million soldiers fighting in Europe. Adams' unit was the lifeline for soldiers' morale, sorting and sending along the tens of millions of love letters, messages from family, and news from home that sustained soldiers' spirits as they fought. Serving at the peak of the American war in Europe, Adams' unit handled nearly 200,000 letters per day and close to six million pieces of mail each month. Gender discrimination limited her promotion to lieutenant colonel, the highest rank attainable during the war by any woman other than the lone colonel serving as the Women's Army Corps director. But her effectiveness was made clear when it took three units of men to replace her battalion after they disbanded.

As Lt. Col. Charity Adams prepared to depart the Army in 1945, Arthur Gregg prepared to enter it. Seventeen years old, frustrated by segregation, and inspired by the service of African-Americans in World War II, Gregg enlisted in 1945. He quickly became involved in supply logistics in occupied Germany. As he helped the Army establish and rebuild the devastated region, Gregg excelled in the work and envisioned his rise within it. He applied to OCS in 1948, the same year President Truman ordered the desegregation of the armed forces. As a result, it fell to soldiers and officers like Gregg to put this policy into practice by changing the culture in their commands and desegregating the Army from the ground up.

Gregg did so with great skill, leading by example and embarking on a career of excellence from the moment he graduated OCS. Gregg ran a supply depot in Japan, commanded a supply and support battalion in Vietnam, and served in several assignments in Germany throughout the Cold War, including his leadership of the Army and Air Force Exchange System. At the peak of his service, Gregg served as logistics director for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and as Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics for the Army. In addition to his extensive service throughout the world, Gregg also promoted equality at home. As a young officer in the 1950s, Gregg also personally desegregated the Fort Lee Officers Club, and, throughout his career, he mentored numerous younger soldiers. When the Army established an award for logistics innovation and excellence in 2016, its namesake – and first recipient – was Lt. Gen. Arthur J. Gregg.

Though Arthur Gregg and Charity Adams served on different missions and in different conflicts, consistent themes of leadership, dedication, and problem solving united their service. Moreover, in overcoming the sustainment obstacles caused by war, they also helped overcome the social obstacles caused by segregation. Their service simultaneously supported mission success and societal progress. Both helped counter threats abroad through their service while mitigating prejudices at home through their performance, and both represent the best traditions of Army sustainment.